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David Demaree Banta, 1833-1896

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Recommended Citation

Myers, Burton Dorr, "David Demaree Banta, 1833-1896" (1951). *David Banta (1889-1896)*. Paper 16.
<http://www.repository.law.indiana.edu/banta/16>

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DAVID DEMAREE BANTA, 1833-1896

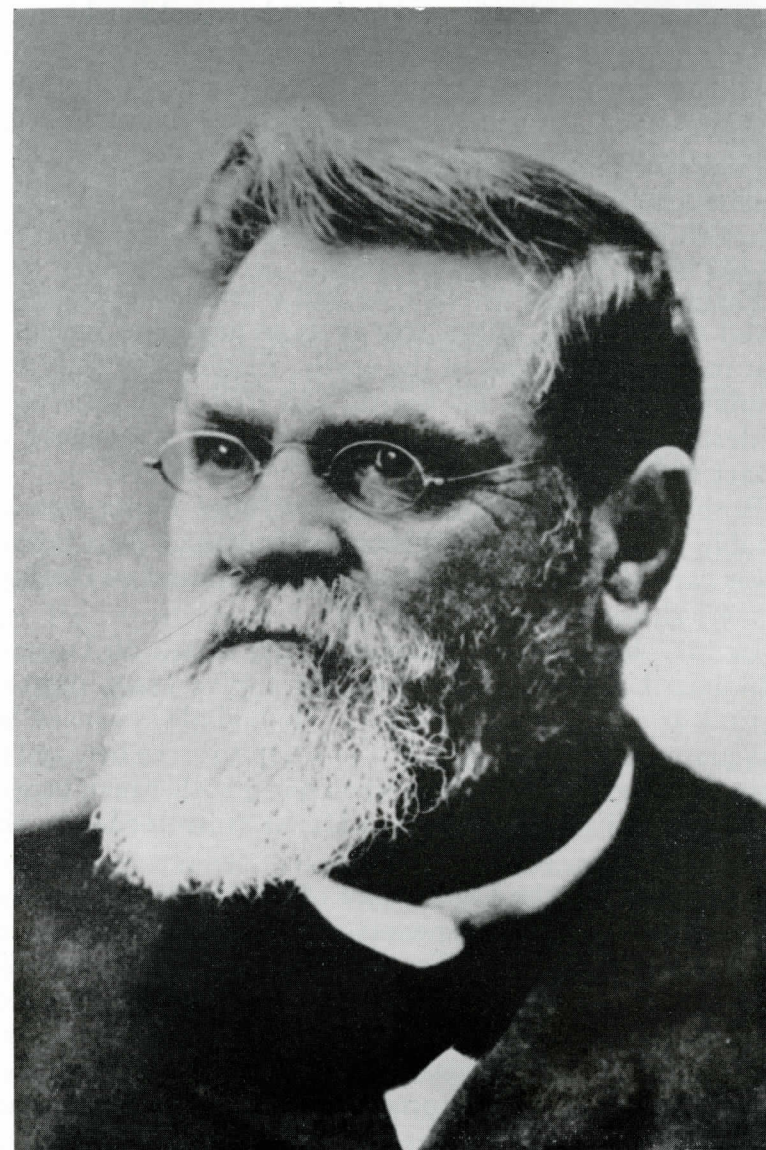
TRUSTEE, 1877-1889

PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD, 1882-1889

DAVID DEMAREE BANTA, of Johnson County, writer, judge, and dean of the Indiana University School of Law, was born March 23, 1833, in Johnson County, Ind., son of Jacob and Sarah (Demaree) Banta. David's ancestors, French and Frisian, had come from Holland and settled in New Amsterdam in 1674. About the time of the Revolution they had emigrated to Pennsylvania, and later to Kentucky. In 1832 David's parents had come to Indiana and settled in what was later known as the Shiloh neighborhood of Johnson County, where David was born. From his mother he inherited his deeply reverent and religious spirit and that love of letters that so strongly marked his life.

Through the efforts of Jacob Banta, the settlement was early supplied with a church, to which the name Shiloh was given. A schoolhouse soon followed. On the first day of the first school in this Shiloh schoolhouse, David Banta was the first pupil there. He learned rapidly, and soon became greatly interested in books. He read all the books of the neighborhood, and sometimes even visited other settlements in search of reading matter. At the age of eighteen he taught a country school. Soon after this he was seized with a desire to see something of the world and visited Iowa, tramping part of the way there and part of the way back.

Feeling that he could succeed better in a profession than at manual labor, he began the study of law. He soon discovered what so many men fail to discover, that he needed a liberal education as a basis for his profession. In the spring of 1853 he became a student in Franklin College. In the fall of the same year he went to Indiana University and remained there for four years. In 1855 he received his B.S. degree, and in 1857 his LL.B. In 1856 he married Mrs. M. E. Perrin, of Covington, Ky. Soon after his marriage he had charge, for a short time, of the Monroe County Female Seminary.



DAVID DEMAREE BANTA

In the fall of 1857 he moved to Franklin and opened a law office. Cases came slowly, and he had the usual hard experience of the young practitioner. Various expedients were resorted to in order to piece out the meager income from the law. He served as deputy recorder and was for three years school examiner of Johnson County. But eventually his pluck, his hard work, and his genial good nature won the victory, and cases came. In 1870 he was elected circuit judge and served for six years.

Early in his term of office he had a severe sickness that proved almost fatal. When able to do so he sought improvement in the pine regions of the north. Fishing, hunting, and camping brought back his health, and from that time until his death every summer vacation was spent somewhere in contact with nature.

Both at the bar and on the bench Judge Banta won an enviable place in the legal history of Indiana. As a lawyer he was careful, accurate, and thorough. His mind was logical. No mere rhetoric moved him.

In 1877 he became a member of the Board of Trustees of Indiana University. He served for twelve years, most of the time as president of the board. He had always loved his alma mater, and he was now in a position to serve her, and at no time did he serve so well as when he and other members of the Board of Trustees promoted David Starr Jordan to the presidency.

In 1889, when the Law School of the University was reopened, Judge Banta was persuaded by Jordan to resign as president of the Board of Trustees and assume the deanship of the School of Law. He organized it, planned its course of study, and directed it until his death. As a teacher he had few superiors. His enthusiasm was contagious, and got from his students their best efforts. Whatever success he had, he himself attributed to his ability to make the subject interesting.

As a writer he contributed many articles to the leading papers and to the magazines devoted to outdoor sports, *Out-*

ing, Field and Stream, Rod and Gun. He wrote a history of Johnson County, a history of the Presbyterian Church of Franklin, and assisted very greatly in the writing of *Biographical Sketches and Review of the Bench and Bar of Indiana* (Charles W. Taylor). One of his finest achievements was as historian of Indiana University. His work in this field is valuable beyond measure. Though his reorganization of the School of Law was a work of great merit, his Foundation Day addresses on the history of the early days of Indiana University²⁰ stand as his best and most enduring monument.

He died April 9, 1896, at Bloomington, Ind.

Source: R. J. Aley, *Inland Educator* (June, 1896), pp. 267-68.

GODLOVE STONER ORTH, 1817-1882

TRUSTEE, 1878-1882

GODLOVE STONER ORTH, of Tippecanoe County, congressman, United States minister to Vienna, was born near Lebanon, Pa., April 22, 1817. The family was Moravian and had emigrated from the old German Empire to a colony in Pennsylvania about 1725, where this son was christened Gottlieb Steiner Orth. As he grew up the name was Anglicized, and Gottlieb became Godlove and Steiner became Stoner, so the judge's name, as it appears on the Library of Congress card, is Godlove Stoner Orth. His grandfather, Balthazel, was an ardent patriot in the Revolution. As provost marshal of his district he drafted members of his own family for the army.

Godlove attended Pennsylvania College at Gettysburg. He then entered the office of James Cooper as a student of law and, at the age of twenty-two, was admitted to the bar. Prior to deciding on a location he made a tour of inspection through Ohio and Indiana. At Delphi, Carroll County, Ind., he met John Pettit and became his partner in Lafayette.

In October, 1840, he married Elizabeth Miller, of Gettysburg, Pa. She died in 1849, and in August, 1850, he married Mary A. Ayers, of Lafayette.

²⁰ Published in Woodburn, *History of Indiana University, 1820-1902*.